...

HURRY UP AND PUT SOMETHING ON.

WHAT'S WRONG?

I THINK YOU'VE MISUNDERSTOOD THINGS, YOU'VE NO NEED TO WORRY.

I'VE NO INTEREST IN PURCHASING BOYS FOR SEX.

WE WON'T BE STAYING HERE FOR LONG.

YOU NEEDN'T GLARE AT ME LIKE THAT.

はあ...

IF YOU COME WITH ME YOU'LL SEE.

ERM... WHERE ARE WE GOING THEN?

CHAPTER XXXIV: TRANSITION

MASTER, WHERE THE HELL...

WERE YOU SOLD TO...?

SEE MASTER AGAIN.

I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER...

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ゴッ。

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ゴッ。

IT'S TO BE EXPECTED.

HE WAS EXPOSED TO THAT POISONOUS ATMOSPHERE AFTER ALL...

SO I FELL ASLEEP...

WE'VE ARRIVED, GET DOWN.

EH?! AH...

WAKE UP!

I'M SURE I RECOGNISE THIS PLACE...

HUUH...?

!

AH, THAT'S IT, THIS IS...

I HAVE DELIVERED HIM...

YOUR MAJESTY.

YOUR MAJESTY NERO!

FINE WORK...

DRAIZEN.

CESTVS...

YOU'VE NOT CHANGED AT ALL.

THAT MEANS THE ONE WHO BOUGHT ME WAS...

I SEE NOW...!

?

UMM...

AHEM.

IT SEEMS YOU'VE REALISED YOUR OWN STANDING...

HAD I NOT SAVED YOU THEN AROUND NOW...

WHO KNOWS WHAT THOSE PERVERTS WOULD HAVE BEEN DOING TO YOU.

MM.

P... PARDON ME.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

AH!

BUT YOU NEEDN'T WORRY CESTVS.

...

YOU NEED NEVER FIGHT AGAIN...

INFACT, YOU'VE NOW BEEN FREED FROM ALL WORRIES OVER DEATH OR STARVATION TOO.

EH?

CESTVS!

UNDER-STOOD?

YOUR MAJES-TY...

YES...

I CAN'T GO AGAINST HIM.

IF YOU WOULD DRAIZEN.

FIRSTLY, ARRANGE HIM SOME PROPER ATTIRE.

UNDER-STOOD.

FROM NOW ON...

YOU SHALL SERVE AS A SLAVE OF THE EMPEROR...

THAT IS, YOU SHALL SERVE ME ALONE.

STILL AFRAID OF ME...

I KNEW IT HE'S...

DEMITORIUS' ESTATE.

AT THE SAME TIME...

ｽﾞ...

...

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WOULD YOU COME AND OPEN THIS.

LUCRETIA.

BROTH-ER.

IT'LL SOON BE TIME FOR FOOD.

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ME?!

THE ITEM I REQUESTED FINALLY ARRIVED.

AND I'M GIVING IT TO YOU.

I WONDER, JUST WHAT SORT OF LOVELY THING IS IT...?

FUFU.

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IT... IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN SPUN FROM MOONLIGHT!

WAAAH. WHAT A PRETTY CLOTH.

IT'S SMOOTH TO TOUCH, LIKE A GENTLE BREEZE.

IT'S LIGHT LIKE FEATHER, BUT SO GLOSSY TOO...

AAAH, YES...

IT'S WELL RENOWNED...!

IT'S SILK.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF IT?

IT'S AN EXTREMELY VALUABLE ITEM WHICH IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET AHOLD OF.

EVEN THE ROMANS, WHO HAD AMASSED A TOWERING CIVILISATION, WERE UNABLE TO IMAGINE THE SECRET BEHIND ITS PRODUCTION.

A PRODUCT IMPORTED FROM THE FAR EASTERN EMPIRE OF THE HAN.

SILK

NATURALLY, IT WAS IN THOSE DAYS* THE HIGHEST GRADE OF FABRIC.

* DURING THE REIGN OF THE FIRST EMPEROR, AUGUSTUS, A LAW WAS PASSED WHICH PREVENTED THE SELLING OF SUCH HIGH QUALITY GOODS AS A MATTER OF FRUGALITY.

ROME

THE ROUTE WHICH SPANNED EURASIA AND LINKED THE TWO GREAT POWERS...

WOULD IN POSTERITY COME TO BE KNOWN AS THE "SILK ROAD". IT IS SOMETHING WHICH EVEN PRESENT DAY JAPANESE ARE DEEPLY FAMILIAR WITH.

JAPAN

I'D ORIGINALLY GOTTEN AHOLD OF IT FOR VALERIA, BUT...

IT'S USELESS AND I'VE NO WANT FOR IT NOW.

MM...

!!

BUT, THIS MEANS...!

IT'D BE GOOD FOR YOU TO OCCASIONALLY GO TO THE THEATRE...

YOU'RE ALWAYS STUCK IN THE HOUSE.

WE CAN CALL A TAILOR TOMORROW...

I FIGURED YOU MIGHT LIKE IT AS A MEMENTO...

ふう…

YES... THAT'S RIGHT...

GOING OUT FOR RELAX-ATION.

YOU SHOULDN'T JUST STAY LOCKED UP IN YOUR ROOM!

IF THAT'S THE CASE THEN I WANT YOU TO COME WITH ME!

ERM... IS NOW A GOOD TIME, YOUNG MASTER...?

HEY!

PARDON THE INTER-RUPTION.

YOU'VE GUESTS.

YOU SEEM WELL TOO EDDA.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE MASTER.

WE'LL BE HAVING DINNER AFTER THIS.

YOU MUST JOIN US.

...!

YOU LOOK GAUNT RUSKA...

IT'S NOT GOING DOWN AT ALL IS IT!

EAT UP BROTHER!

GEEZ.

I'M FULL ALREADY.

IF YOU DON'T EAT HEARTILY THEN YOU WON'T HAVE ANY ENERGY!

YOU'VE BARELY EATEN A THING HAVE YOU?!

NO WONDER YOU'RE LIKE THAT...

I'VE NO DOUBT IT'S BEEN HARD FOR YOU...

BUT YOU MUST STAND UP ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET!

RUSKA, YOUR FORLORN MOOD IS UNDERSTANDABLE.

YET YOU EAT FAR TOO HEARTILY!

DO NOT TELL ME YOU'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO...

YOU MUST PUSH ON AND OVERCOME THIS!

WAS THE ONLY REASON YOU CAME ALONG FOOD?!

RUSKA...!

BEFORE RETURNING TO THE PRAETORIAN GUARD I WOULD LIKE TO RECOVER MY DULLED BODY.

COULD YOU ARRANGE A MATCH FOR ME?

MASTER...

I DON'T BELIEVE I'LL BE ABLE TO GET OVER THIS ALONE...

I MUST HAVE AN OPPONENT.

IF YOU WANT A LARGE EVENT, THEN THERE AREN'T MANY DAYS REMAINING FOR THE NEXT ONE...

WILL YOU BE ABLE TO PREPARE IN TIME?

WHY?

WHY NOT ALONE...

I GUESS THIS'LL DO! EVEN IF I WERE TO HELP HIM POLISH HIS SKILLS UNTIL THE END...

AS IS I DO NOT BELIEVE HE'D EVER GET USED TO THINGS.

BROTHER...

IT SEEMS WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GO AND PLAY NOW.

MY APOLOGIES LUCRETIA.

HE'S NOT APOLOGIZING WITH THAT GAZE...

I'M SORRY...

WHAT ON EARTH IS HE SEEING WITH THOSE EYES OF HIS?!

SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY...

IT'S ALMOST LIKE HE'S SOME-WHERE ELSE?

THERE IS NOTHING THAT ONE CANNOT GET HERE IN ROME!

ONCE MORE IN THE EMPEROR'S PALACE...

TREASURY.

THIS IS THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD!

ALL OF THE RICHES HERE ARE NOT JUST FROM PROVINCES SURROUNDING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, BUT FAR DISTANT COUNTRIES...

DO YOU UNDERSTAND CESTVS?

THIS IS ROME.

GOLD FROM HISPANIA.

SYRIAN GLASS.

THE WORLD'S KNOWLEDGE, CULTURE, AND ARTS!

THE WORLD'S TREASURES!

THE WORLD'S DELICACIES!

AFRICAN IVORY!

EGYPTIAN JEWELS!

GERMANIAN AMBER!

SILK FROM THE FAR EAST!

TAKE A GOOD LOOK.

ARABIAN SPICES!

STANDS AT THE SUMMIT OF ROME, DESIRED?

YET DO YOU KNOW THE ONE THING THAT I, THE ONE WHO...

A FRIEND.

SOMEONE WHO TRULY UNDERSTANDS ME, SOMEONE BOUND TO MY HEART.

≠

JUST ONE FRIEND.

JUST ONE WOULD'VE BEEN ENOUGH.

AH...

YET BACK THEN YOU SPURNED MY REQUEST!

YET YOU STILL REFUSED ME, DIDN'T YOU?!

CESTVS!

YOUR MAJES-TY...

AS EMPEROR I EVEN CAST ASIDE MY PRIDE. I LOWERED MY HEAD AND IMPLORED YOU TO...

THEN WHO WOULD THERE BE TO PROTECT YOU?!

WERE EVEN I TO ABANDON YOU, LIKE YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR MASTER, YOUR SO-CALLED "FAMILY"...

N... NO, THAT'S...

DID YOU BELIEVE I WOULD BOW MY HEAD AND IMPLORE YOU ONCE MORE?!

WHO DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?!

MY LORD...

KUH.

DO NOT TOUCH ME SO EASILY!

YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A VULGAR BOXING SLAVE.

THE EMPEROR OF THIS GREAT ROME!

I AM NERO CAESAR AUGUSTUS.

I WILL HAVE YOUR OBEDIENCE, CESTVS!

I WILL NOT HEAR ANY OBJECTIONS! I WILL NOT ALLOW THEM!

THAT IS AN IMPERIAL DECREE!

CHAPTER XXXIV: TRANSITION - END